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SUBJECT: KUWAIT: TERRORISM TRIAL CONTINUES, KSS WITNESS  
STRONGLY DEFENDS CASE AGAINST ARIFJAN PLOTTERS IN OPEN COURT

REF: 2009 KUWAIT 1202

11. (SBU) In the ongoing trial of the alleged "Arifjan plotters" -- adjourned since December 21 (reftel) -- Kuwait State Security (KSS) investigator Abdulaziz Salem testified in the Court of First Instance February 2 that though conspiracy charges were dismissed earlier, six Kuwaitis had indeed plotted to attack the US military base Camp Arifjan. In the hearing, which was observed by an Embassy political specialist, Salem strongly defended the case against the defendants, during 90 minutes of tough grilling from the presiding Kuwaiti judge. During his testimony, Salem provided the below details gleaned by KSS during the investigation:

-- KSS received information that two of the defendants (Yousef Ahmad Mohammed and Abdulaziz Al-Qattan) were planning to perform hostile acts in Kuwait. He also testified that Bahraini security forces informed KSS that Yousef Ahmad Mohammed had links to a terror cell in Bahrain.

-- Abdulaziz Al-Qattan confessed to KSS that he and Yousef Ahmad Mohammed had visited a firing range in Sabhan, Kuwait, and that they had received arms training and surveilled Camp Arifjan. Abdulaziz Al-Qattan also allegedly revealed to Yousef Ahmad Mohammed that roles had been assigned to various operatives in preparation for an attack against Camp Arifjan. He further revealed, according to Salem's testimony, that the group had acquired weapons, a truck and explosive material. Salem also testified that Yousef Ahmad Mohammed had volunteered to participate in the planned attack on Camp Arifjan. Sulayman Jamal Ahmad Al-Kandari (son of former MP Jamal Al-Kandari) was also subsequently recruited by Abdulaziz Al-Qattan to participate in the attack.

-- Another defendant, Mohammed Asad Abdullah Al-Kandari initially denied to KSS investigators statements made by Yousef Ahmad Mohammed and Abdulaziz Al-Qattan linking him to Al-Qaeda, but subsequently confessed that he had experimented twice, along with Sulaiman Jamal Ahmad Al-Kandari and Muhsen Fadhil Ayed Al-Fadhli, with explosives using agricultural materials such as fertilizers and sulfur.

-- Defendant Sulayman Jamal Ahmad Al-Kandari also denied initial accusations, but later, when faced with the testimony of the others, admitted that he had made explosives, planned to attack Arifjan Camp, and that he aided and abetted fugitive Muhsen Al-Fadhli. Sulayman was of special interest to KSS because as Deputy Director of Abraj Company, a defense contractor firm, he had had access to Camp Arifjan. He also admitted that he had three machine-guns, one AK-47, two pistols and a shotgun and materials to make explosives.

¶2. (Note: The defendants have reportedly denied their participation in terrorism-related activities and have charged that previous admissions of guilt were obtained under abuse duress at the hands of KSS. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Taking security concerns seriously, a Kuwaiti Special Forces detail escorted the defendants, manacled and blindfolded into the courtroom. The defendants -- two of whom were tried in absentia -- include:

- ¶1. Sulaiman Jamal Ahmad Al-Kandari
- ¶2. Mohammed Asad Abdullah Al-Kandari
- ¶3. Yousef Ahmad Mohammed
- ¶4. Abdulaziz Al-Qattan
- ¶5. Mohammed Abdullah Nasser Al-Dosari (tried in absentia, currently detained by the GoL in Lebanon)
- ¶6. Abdullah Mohammed Ahmad Al-Kandari
- ¶7. Muhsen Fadhil Ayed Al-Fadhli (tried in absentia, currently at large)
- ¶8. Sami Mohammed Marzouq Al-Mutayri

¶4. (SBU) Though conspiracy charges were dismissed (reftel), the defendants still face the following charges:

-- Performing a hostile act against a foreign country which could expose the State of Kuwait to the risk of war or breaking of political relations;

-- Possession of and training on weapons and martial arts with the intent of applying these skills to achieve an illegal purpose.

¶5. (SBU) The trial is scheduled to re-convene on February 15 with testimonies of a ballistics expert and a medical examiner. The court will likely consider charges by the prisoners that they were abused and that their confessions were obtained by force.

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JONES